

Takoma Park Cleanup Day!

Run by local volunteers



Project Goal

To improve the landscaping and beautify Takoma's historic commercial areas by planting flowers, mulching flower beds, clearing weeds, and doing other general garden cleanup. Cleanup Day takes place twice a year – once on a Saturday in late April, and on a Saturday in October.

Timeline for Planning

- **1 month before:** Meetings of the Main Street Takoma Design Committee, a citizen volunteer group, begin. The committee begins to seek sponsors from local businesses, in the range of \$50 to \$100.
- **2 weeks before:** Banners are hung, flyers are distributed, and messages are sent on local listservs in order to recruit volunteers.
- **1-2 weeks before:** Supplies are purchased or received as donations (such as free city mulch).
- **1-2 weeks before:** Reminders are sent that Cleanup Day is coming soon.
- **Within a few days of the event:** All remaining supplies, mainly flowers, are purchased.
- **Day of Cleanup:** People gather at three central locations and two volunteers drive around in a truck, putting all needed supplies in each spot. Each location has a signup sheet and a work plan, as well as a leader.

How Many Volunteers?

At least 12 are needed to make the event worthwhile, but at least 60 have shown up in the past — mostly residents, but also students, boy scouts, and others. Volunteers are asked to bring their own garden tools. Families are encouraged to bring children.

Time Commitment

3 hours on a Saturday morning. People are asked to stay and help for a minimum of 15 minutes but most stay for an hour or more. They do not have to commit for a certain amount of time in advance.

Expenses

Flowers, water for volunteers, banners for publicity. This past fall \$200 was raised from local sponsors and spent but in past cleanups as much as \$750 has been raised and spent.

Publicity

Banners are hung, flyers are distributed, and messages are sent on local listservs in order to recruit volunteers.

Challenges

Fundraising and finding local sponsors

Results

The areas look much cleaner and prettier with all the flowers planted. “Several people stop by to express appreciation, which is nice because you get an immediate positive response to your volunteer work,” says coordinator Michele Morgan.

Tips/Key Steps

Request that people sign up in advance, but don't require it. Promote the event as a family-friendly activity, as children learn a lot about not littering and about planting flowers. Post a rain date in publicity materials (best is for the next day or the next weekend). Offer businesses the opportunity to have their name printed on a banner.

Points of Interest

- > Keep planning as simple as possible
- > Partner with the other organization, especially with a Garden Club.
- > Contact local government to see if any permit is needed

